

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2012

The Honorable Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

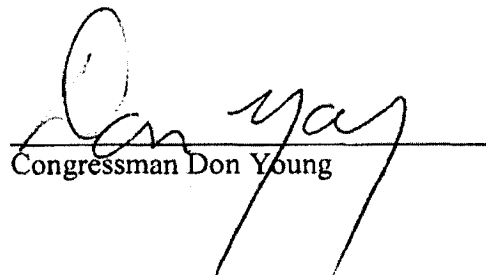
On Friday, May 17, 2012, the EPA released a draft of its "Assessment of Potential Mining Impacts on Salmon Ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska" (hereinafter referred to as "watershed assessment") with a 60-day comment period ending July 23, 2012. We are concerned that this amount of time is inadequate for the public to address the technical and legal merits of the watershed assessment. As such, we write to request a 120-day extension of the comment period, with a new deadline of Tuesday, November 20, 2012. Additionally, we agree with the request from Alaska's Attorney General, Michael C. Geraghty, that the EPA post all reference, bibliography, and source data materials associated with the watershed assessment online. Doing so would increase transparency and improve the quality of comments provided.

We make this request after hearing from a large number of our constituents in Alaska, many of whom are concerned that the volume, scope, and importance of the issues addressed by the watershed assessment cannot be adequately reviewed and commented on in such a short amount of time. Compounding this challenge is the commencement of fishing season and subsistence activities in our state, which will make it extremely difficult for many Alaskans to comment substantively, if at all, given the near-constant work to be done now and through the coming months.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that a 120-day extension of the comment period for the draft watershed assessment be granted. Thank you in advance for considering our request.

Sincerely,

  
Senator Lisa A. Murkowski

  
Congressman Don Young